**THE PARIS PEACE TREATIES: Were the peace treaties of 1929-23 fair?**

**WHAT WERE THE MOTIVES OF THE BIG THREE AT THE TOV**

**Georges Clemenceau:**

* Aggressive: ‘the tiger’.
* Had witnessed previous invasion of France by Germany (1870).
* France suffered enormous damage to its land, industry, people and self confidence.
* Germany seen by France as powerful and threatening.
* Germany not as badly damaged as France – Clemenceau wanted to cripple Germany so that it could not attack France again.
* Wanted return of Alsace Lorraine.
* French president wanted Germany broken up into smaller states, but Clemenceau knew that the British and Americans wouldn’t accept this.
* Wanted reparations – compensation for damage.
* He knew he would have to compromise on some things, but was aware of the public opinion in France too.
* Wanted a treaty which would weaken Germany as much as possible.

**Woodrow Wilson:**

* Wanted a more peaceful world.
* He believed that Germany should be punished but not too harshly – afraid that some day it would recover and seek revenge.
* Strengthen democracy in the defeated nation so that its people would not let its leaders cause another war.
* Believed nations should co-operate to achieve world peace.
* Published the fourteen points:

1. No secret treaties.
2. Free access to the seas in peacetime or wartime.
3. Free trade between all countries.
4. All countries to work towards disarmament.
5. Colonies to have a say in their own future.
6. German troops to leave Russia.
7. Independence for Belgium.
8. France to regain Alsace-Lorraine.
9. Frontier between Italy and Austria to be adjusted.
10. Self determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe (should rule themselves).
11. Serbia to have access to the sea.
12. Self determination for the people in the Turkish Empire.
13. Poland to become an independent state with access to the sea.
14. League of Nations to be set up.

* Most important was the fourteenth.
* Many people in France and Britain did not agree with his ideas – impractical.
* Self determination – very hard to give Eastern Europeans chance to rule themselves because they were scattered across many countries – 25% of the population of the new state of Czechoslovakia were not Czechs or Slovaks.
* Some were bound to end up being ruled by people from another group with different languages and customs.

**David Lloyd George**

* Often in the middle ground between Wilson and Clemenceau.
* Wanted Germany to be punished but not too harshly (wanted to be able to do trade with them).
* Wanted Germany to lose its colonies and navy – threat to the British Empire.
* Didn’t want Germany to seek revenge in the future and possibly begin another war.
* Wanted to trade with each other again.
* Problems with public pressures at home for a harsh treaty.
* MPs didn’t always agree with him – won election by promising to ‘make Germany pay’.
* Wanted to expand Brit. Empire.

**Disagreements and Compromises**

* Not all objectives could be met.
* Disagreement over Rhineland.
* Clashes between Clemenceau and others – not to treat Germany too harshly – USA and Lloyd George vs. Clemenceau and French/British People.
* Lloyd George unhappy about 2nd point of the fourteen points – threatening to the government as the empire ruled millions of people all across the world from London.
* Self determination – France and Britain vs. US.

**TERMS OF THE TOV**

1. **War guilt:** Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war.
2. **Reparations:** Germany had to pay reparations to the allies for the damage caused by the war. In 1921 the figure was agreed to be £6600 million. If the terms of the payments had not later been changed under the Young Plan in 1929, Germany would have finished paying this bill in 1984.
3. **German territories and colonies:** Germany was to lose its overseas empire and its colonies became mandates controlled by the League of Nations, which effectively meant that Britain and France controlled them. Germany was forbidden from joining together with its former ally Austria.
4. **Germany’s armed forces:** Army limited to 100 000 men, conscription banned, not allowed armoured vehicles, submarines or aircraft, only six battleships, Rhineland became a demilitarised zone (border area between Germany and France).
5. **League of Nations:** Set up as an ‘international police force’. Germany was not invited to join until it had proven that it was a peace loving country.

**OTHER TREATIES**

**St Germain – 1919 – Austria:**

* Separated Austria from Hungary.
* Austria lost Galicia to Poland and land to Italy.
* Army restricted to 30 000.
* Forbidden to ever unite with Germany.
* Most of its industry went to Czechoslovakia.

**Treaty of Neuilly – 1919 – Bulgaria:**

* Bulgaria lost land to Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia and its access to the Mediterranean.
* Limited its armed force to 20 000.
* £100 million in reparations.

**Treaty of Trianon – 1920 – Hungary:**

* Lost territories to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.
* Industry suffered.
* Was due to pay reparations but economy too weak.

**Treaty of Sèvres – 1920 – Turkey:**

* Lost land to Greece and Mandates under French control.
* Effectively lost control of the straits running into the Black Sea.
* Formally accepted that countries of their former empire were now independent or under British or French protection.
* Turks outraged.
* In the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) Smyrna was returned to Turkey.

**REACTION**

**Woodrow Wilson:** satisfied but not completely –

* Would have liked:
* Term about Germany’s armed forces because he wanted all countries to work towards disarmament.
* Alsace Lorraine’s return to France.
* Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia’s independence (wanted self-determination for eastern Europe).
* Poland got access to the sea through Polish Corridor.
* League of Nations.
* Wouldn’t have liked:
* Germany being punished so much – didn’t want this.
* Nothing about stopping secret treaties.
* Only *Germany’s* armed forces limited – wanted *everyone* to work towards disarmament.
* German colonies weren’t given independence – given to Britain and France.

**Lloyd George:**

* Would have liked:
* Germany losing its navy and colonies – threat to the British Empire.
* Wouldn’t have liked:
* Germany’s harsh punishment – might seek revenge.
* Didn’t expand British Empire.

**Clemenceau:** happiest –

* Would have liked:
* Alsace Lorraine returned to France.
* Rhineland demilitarised.
* German army weakened.
* Had to pay huge reparations – suffered.
* Wouldn’t have liked:
* Germany not broken into separate states.
* Not crippled enough.

**IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON GERMANY**

* Lost:
* 10% of its land.
* 12.5% of its population.
* 16% of its coalfields and almost half of its iron and steel industry.
* All of its overseas colonies.
* Army reduced to 100 000 men, no air force, tiny navy.
* Had to accept blame for the war.
* Horrified and outraged.
* Didn’t feel defeated.
* Angry that their government wasn’t represented at these talks.
* Ebert (leader) was told by Hindenburg (army commander) that Germany couldn’t win.
* Ebert reluctantly signed the treaty on 28th June 1919.
* Disarmament upset Germans and damaged their pride – saw it as unfair – 14 points had said disarmament for everyone but Germany was worst affected.
* Germany lost a lot of territory – blow to pride and economy, lost important industrial areas, while Germany was losing land Britain and France were expanding their empires.
* Fourteen Points and the League of Nations – felt that the treatment of Germany was not in keeping with Wilson’s fourteen points – self determination not given to German-speaking peoples – not invited to L of N.
* ‘Double Standards’ – complaints fell on deaf ears – Germans themselves operating a double standard – call for fairer treatment did not square with the harsh way they had treated Russia in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 – Versailles much less harsh – Germany’s economic problems were partly self-inflicted – hadn’t thought of how they would pay war debts if they lost.
* 1919 – government very fragile.
* Treaty tipped Germany into chaos.
* RW opponents couldn’t bear the Treaty and attempted to revolt against Ebert’s govn.
* Kapp putsch.
* Fell behind on reparation payments in 22 – in 23 French and Belgian soldiers entered the Ruhr and took raw materials and goods. Legal under the Treaty.
* German govn. Ordered the workers to go on strike so there were no goods to take, but the French killed over 100 workers and expelled over 100 000 protestors from the region. Strike also meant there were no goods to trade.
* Printed extra money – hyperinflation. Money worthless – prices shot up. Prices could increase in the space of time it took to drink a cup of coffee in a cafe.
* Workers needed wheelbarrows to carry home the billions of worthless marks they had.
* Wages began to be paid daily instead of weekly.
* Germans blamed problems on the treaty.
* Some say that the French reacted too harshly but some think that the problems were self-inflicted, as Germany had failed to pay reparations.

**WAS THE TREATY JUSTIFIABLE?**

* 1919 – Treaty criticised by Germans and none of the Big Three were wholly satisfied.
* Clemenceau – not harsh enough, in 1920 he was voted out in a French general election.
* Lloyd George – he described the treaty as a ‘great pity’ – believed another war would start because of it.
* Wilson – didn’t approve the treaty.
* Caused WWII.
* Majority of people outside Germany felt it was fair.
* Treaty was the best to be hoped for under the circumstances.